

Wm. Codd.

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HARVARD.



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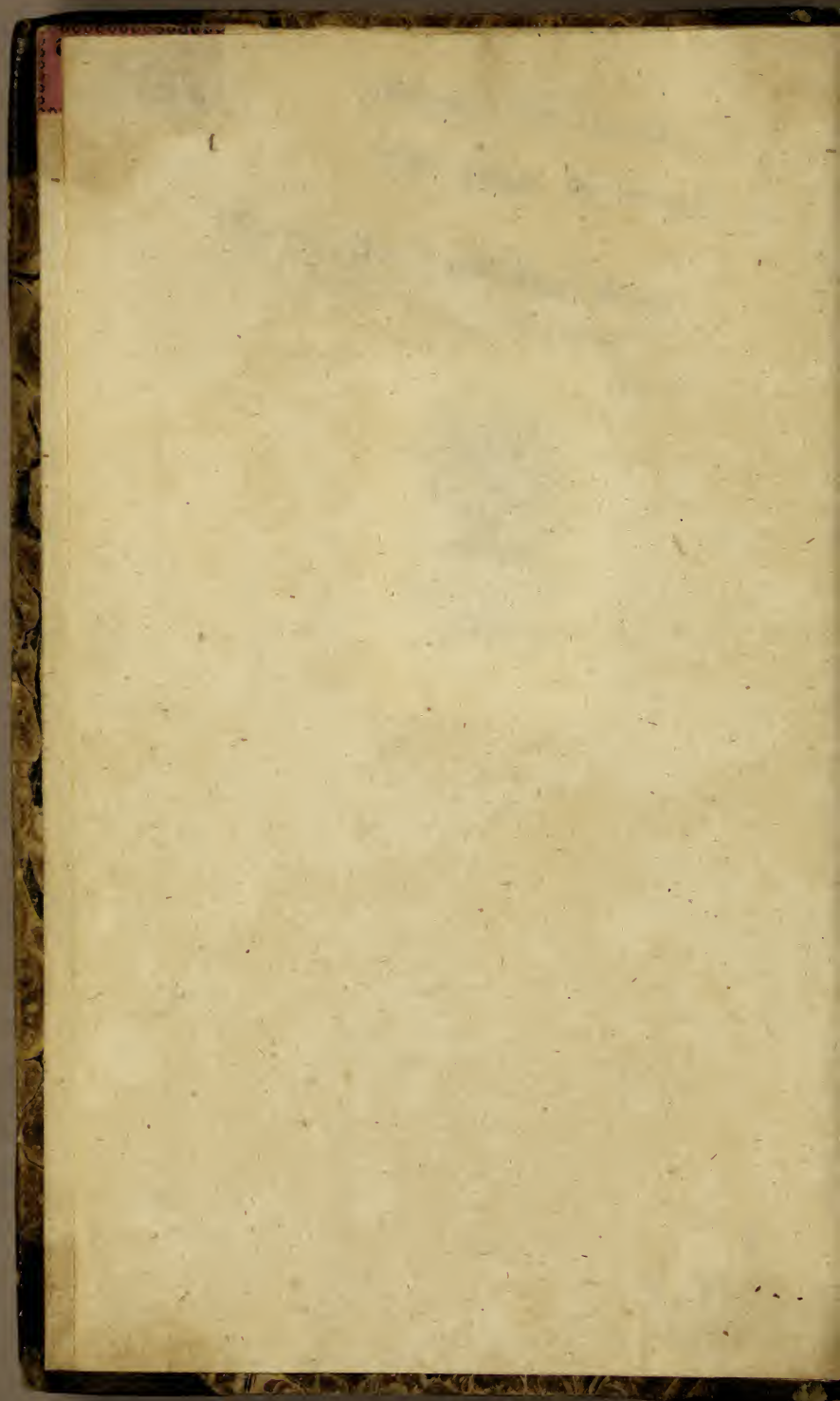
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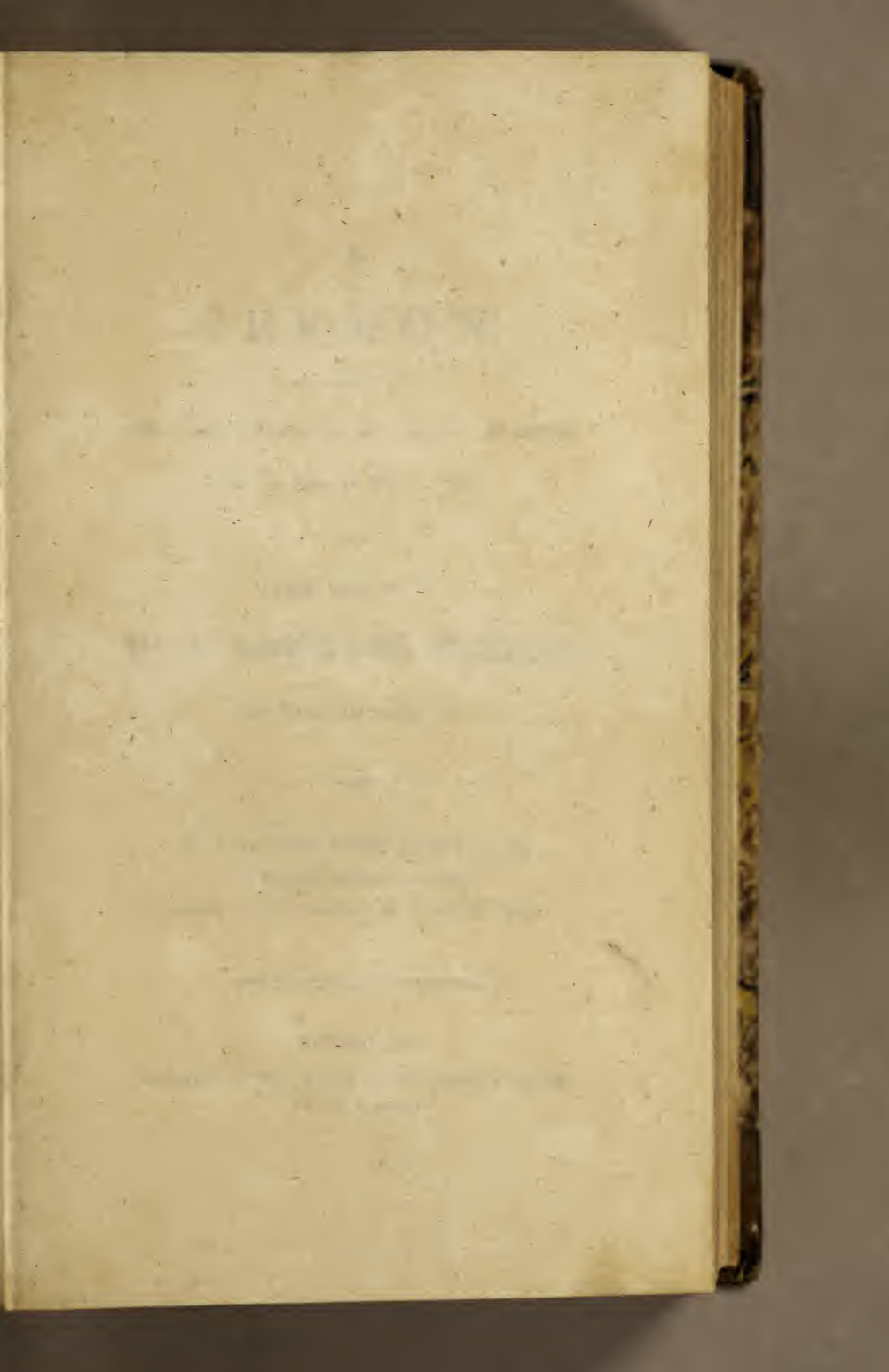
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THE  
RIGHTS

OF THE  
ENGLISH CLERGY

Asserted,

AND THE  
PROBABLE AMOUNT OF THEIR INCOMES ESTIMATED,

IN  
A LETTER

TO THE  
AUTHOR OF "REMARKS ON THE CONSUMPTION OF PUBLIC WEALTH,  
BY THE CLERGY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN NATION."

---

BY AUGUSTUS CAMPBELL, A. M.

Rector of Wallasey,  
IN THE COUNTY OF CHESTER.

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SECOND EDITION.

LIVERPOOL:

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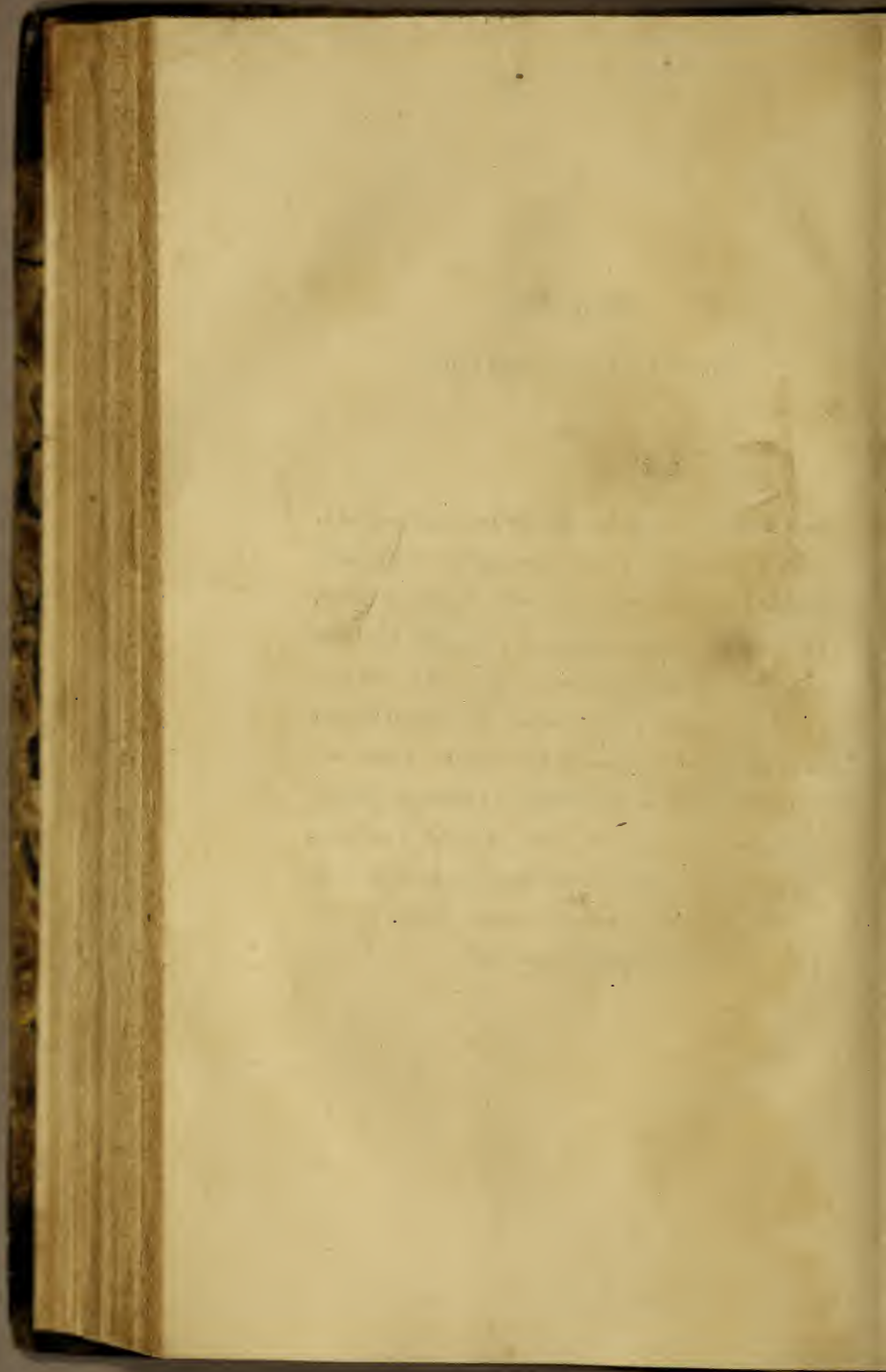


## PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THIS PAMPHLET, intended solely for the neighbourhood in which it was written, having, from peculiar circumstances, attained a wider circulation, and passed through one edition, I am induced to publish another; in which some few verbal and arithmetical inaccuracies are corrected, and a little additional matter inserted; the quotations, also, where it has been in my power, are attributed to their respective authors.—If I am to judge from the specimens of anonymous eloquence which have been sent me, in one of which I am called “a parson and a viper!”—convertible terms no doubt in the writer’s estimation—it is probable that the “withers” of our adversaries are not altogether “unwrung.”



## A LETTER.

SIR,

HAVING accidentally met with your Remarks upon the Consumption of Public Wealth by the Clergy of every Christian Nation, I was naturally tempted to inquire what further could be said upon a subject which for the last two centuries has presented an almost annual contest to the eyes of the public, and in the novelty of the thing I have certainly not seen much to admire: unless it can be deemed new to neglect those expedients which are usually employed to gild the pill of confiscation, and with a thorough contempt for the rights of private property, to recommend without reservation the unconditional spoliation of the church. As, however, to ordinary readers, boldness of assertion supplies the place of novelty; and as your calculations respecting the value of church property are characterized by an uncommon freshness of invention and vigour of fancy, I think perhaps my time may not be idly spent in endeavouring to efface the agreeable impression that such qualities are likely to inspire. It is not of course my intention to follow you in the wide field of discussion which you have chosen respecting the ecclesiastical polity of foreign nations, but to confine myself to that with which alone I am conversant—the consideration of our own.

The object of your work, in this limited view of it, is to present the public with a volume of "Remarks upon the Consumption of Public Wealth by the Clergy of the Established Church, with a Plan for Altering its Revenues, subject to existing interests, whereby the



episcopal body would be provided for upon a scale to make them the richest episcopal body in the world: the working clergy of the Establishment would be much better provided for than at present, and upwards of one hundred millions obtained to extinguish so much of the national debt, and relieve the nation from four millions of annual taxes."

Now certainly this is a most alluring prospectus. The most tender and judicious consideration for existing interests; the episcopal body shorn a little it is true, but still left the richest drones in the world; the working clergy better off than ever, and John Bull relieved from four millions of taxes; and as by an unprecedented act of political justice, you exclude the lay impropriations, and thus leave untouched the most vexatious, oppressive, and useless part of the tithe, while you rob the only men who do any thing for their money, you no doubt must flatter yourself that the virtue of King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, will never be able to resist so tempting an offer. In the interval, however, which must elapse between its publication and acceptance, I will trouble you with my opinion upon the justice, expedience, and necessity of such a proceeding.

In the first place, I think you have to shew what you mean by the *Consumption* of Wealth by the Clergy. In common conversation clergymen are talked of as a species of locust, filling their bellies with the fruit of the ground, like that great and strong people which the prophet Joel describes, as desolating the fertile vallies of Judea, "with the land as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness:" and your use of the word consumption conveys to my mind the same meaning. It seems to imply, that the wealth enjoyed by the clergy is destroyed by them, without communicating any benefit to the rest of the community; for you say, "the clergy are not the producers of wealth, they are the consumers of that produced by others"—a truism which would hardly have been worth mentioning, unless it had been meant to draw from it some consequences disparaging to the class of men of whom it was spoken. The clergy



certainly are not the producers of wealth, but how in this respect do they differ from any of the unproductive classes, the physician, the lawyer, the gentleman, or the peer? And how in this respect could they be changed, unless it is wished to make them at once productive and unproductive labourers, like some Christian ministers, who mend shoes and save souls at the same time! We never hear of the consumption of public wealth by the nobility and gentry of the land; on the contrary, they are considered, especially if they reside upon their estates, as the dispensers of opulence and comfort to all around them; and indeed it may fairly be said, that no wealth is consumed in a bad sense, but such as is actually lost to the community by whose labour it is produced. The produce of the land and labour of every country is destined to replace capital, or produce revenue. That which replaces capital is the most valuable, as it pays the wages of productive labour only; that which produces revenue, is uncertain in its value, inasmuch as it maintains indifferently productive or unproductive labourers. But that which is squandered upon foreign artists at home, to be by them carried off and spent in their own countries; or that which is disposed of by absentees abroad, is absolutely and totally lost, and the nation derives no benefit from it whatever. For this reason, therefore, the wealth of the clergy, which *must* generally, and ought *always* to be spent in their parishes, and none of it lavished upon foreigners, is certainly as well, probably better spent than that of the laity; and the community profits equally, perhaps more, from its distribution.

In the next place, I think you should shew by what logic you prove private property to be public wealth. The possessions of the church are as much private property as that of any corporation or any individual in the realm—unquestionably as much as that of the lay impropiators; and the condition upon which they are held, of performing ministerial duties, no more makes them public property, than the condition of performing certain military and civil services does that of the laity. Every man holds his estate upon conditions: he is

obliged to fill certain offices, and to perform military service by himself, or a deputy, if required; but his property does not thereby become a part of the public wealth, neither does ours.\*

Having animadverted thus far upon the title, I will make one passing observation upon the distinction which is made between the idle and the working clergy, and the classification which places the bishops amongst the former. The power, the influence, and the wealth of some of the bishops may be great; but from my heart I believe that these are dearly bought, not only by the anxiety, but the actual labour both of body and mind which arises from their official duties; and whatever the emoluments of a bishoprick may be, I should be glad to know where you will find one that is a sinecure.

With this I will conclude my remarks upon the title, and proceed to the introduction of the work, in which it is obliquely implied, that "a crisis of our financial concerns is at hand, when perhaps the holders of all real and funded property must contribute a portion of it to extinguish a part of the national debt, and that in so pressing an emergency it seems extremely probable that the revenues of the church will be the first sacrifice. That such has been the case in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy; that France and America, being freed from the enormous weight of a church establishment, must of necessity outrun us in the race of national wealth and power; and that a time will come when it will be judicious for us to cease to expend upon the clergy a sum thought to be as great as the revenues of the clergy of all the other Christian nations on the face of the earth."

Now to the first part of these propositions I have not of course much to object; I am no prophet, and

\* "The clergy, it is said, are an order of men instituted and provided for by the public, for the public good. So are land-owners. Property itself is such an institution: and if personal residence upon such property be expedient, the legislature has as much natural right to annex it as an obligation to one lot of property as another.....We recommend it to those who have been so long in the habit of legislating for the clergy, to deliberate upon a bill of pains and penalties for obliging country gentlemen to live upon their estates."

*Edinb. Rev.*, Vol. V., p. 302, 3.



therefore cannot deny the proximity of the financial crisis which they allude to; and in that case, no doubt the holders of all real and funded property must contribute; and the clergy must of course, and doubtless will, cheerfully bear their part: but circumstanced as England is, and implicated as the rights of her clergy are by means of the lay impropriations with the strongest interests of the state, I do most joyfully disbelieve the extreme probability of their approaching sacrifice, and do most solemnly deny that such a sacrifice can ever honourably or justly be made. For, strange as it may appear to those who affirm that the property of our ecclesiastical corporations is justly transferable at the caprice of the legislature, I consider it to be as inalienable as that of any individuals in the state: that the income which we derive from it can no more be considered a burden upon the community than the rent of the landlord, and that it is as illogical to talk of the wealth expended upon the clergy as it would be to talk of that expended upon the nobility and gentry of the land. The clergy inherit their possessions by a title more ancient than that of the most ancient family in the kingdom. They draw their tithe from the land by the same right that the landlord draws his rent, and spend it as usefully, perhaps more so; and if you compel them to contribute the proceeds of their freeholds *singly* to the exigences of the state, you can do so by no law but that of the strongest.

More fully to comprehend the violation of justice which would be committed by transferring to the people by a forced sale the freeholds of the clergy, we have only to inquire whence the appropriation of those freeholds in most instances had its origin. Upon the first establishment of Christianity, the owners of lands built churches for themselves and their vassals, and the lord, making use of that liberty which he is said to have enjoyed previous to the settlement of parochial tithes in A. D. 1200, of granting his tithes or lands to any ecclesiastical body or person that he pleased, settled a certain portion of them for the maintenance of a minister, whom he thus appointed spiritual superintendant over the manor of which he was lord, and which was

thereby constituted a parish; so that the extent of a manor and a parish are ordinarily the same. The endowment being thus originally the gift of the landlord, can never by any shadow of justice be transferred to the people: the subsequent possessors of the property have the same indefeasible right, and every contract which has been made for the purchase of land since the first infeudation of tithes has been made subject to this invariable provision. Thus in the parish of which your humble correspondent is the unworthy minister, a certain William de Walley did some time before the year 1182 give to the Abbey of St. Werburgh, which furnished an incumbent, a mediety of the church of Wallasey, "*cum omnibus pertinentibus in puram eleemosinam:*" and perhaps about the same time he gave to the priest thereof for ever certain fields, now my glebe. Now let me ask what possible right the land or fundholders of this realm can have to enjoy any part, however small, of this property, which was absolutely given away in *puram eleemosinam* above 600 years ago by William de Walley; which was secured nearly three centuries ago to my predecessors for their sole use, under the most clear and undeniable sanctions of the legislature; which has been recognized as theirs ever since, and employed by them in the same manner, and perhaps to better purposes, than the other rents of the kingdom have been devoted to. The tenants of course can have no right, neither would they in any case be freed from a charge which formed an integral part of their contract with their landlords. The landlords can have no right to refuse a payment, subject to which they either inherited their estates, or bought them for a less price than they otherwise would have given; and certainly they who have no land at all, have no right whatever to seek relief from four millions of taxes by the spoliation of a neighbour, merely because that neighbour happens to be a priest instead of a layman, and to preach in church on a Sunday instead of going to sleep in it.

As for the old story of the tripartite division of tithes between the clergy, the poor, and the church repairs, we might as well go up to Melchisedec at



once as refer to that. Previous to the parochial settlement, the whole tithes of the diocese were divided into four parts, of which the bishop had one, the clergy one, the poor one, and the church one. But this ceased when the clergy increased in number, *and were settled in their benefices*: it ceased ages before the spoliation of the church in Henry's time, and certainly is not to be resorted to now. At any rate, if the argument proves any thing it proves too much; and if the poor are entitled to one-fourth, the bishops are entitled to another: a conclusion which the reformers would not much relish. It is not true however, I imagine, that the poor were ever supported by the parochial tithes; they were perhaps partially by the impropriations: and if all gain in professions and trades were titheable now as it was formerly, and the lands of which the church has been robbed were restored to her, I dare say she would have no objection to take care of the poor. At and since the Reformation she has been deprived of two-thirds of her revenues, calculated by Dr. Cove at nearly £6,000,000 per annum; and this, by good management, would keep the poor, and leave something over.

"No man inherits, or has purchased, or holds land that was not antecedently subject to tithes. Therefore the clergy does not claim any thing that ever belonged to any present proprietor of land, of whatever kind his title may be."—"Men of fortune," says Bishop Watson, "grudge the clergy their due by laws which were made long before they or their ancestors possessed their estates: this grudging is as evidently founded in injustice, as if all the copyholders of the kingdom were to demand an exemption from the payment of the lords' rents to which their estates have for many centuries been subject."

This payment, however, is a burden which, according to your doctrine, the community have a right to be freed from in these times of difficulty. But I ask why? Why of this more than rent, which is a burden too, and one of the same sort? For it is a gross misrepresentation to say that tithes are generally taken in kind; they are more generally leased for a

term of years, and therefore do not increase with the gross income.\* They increase with the improvement of cultivation, and rents do the same; they raise the price of produce, and rents do the same; they belong to one class of proprietors, and rents belong to another: and why you are to rob the one, and lend money to the other to buy the fruits of the robbery, I cannot conceive. It is not law—it is not equity; and if it is policy, I confess I am too blind to see it. Tithes, it is said, are an intolerable impediment to agriculture; it is strange they should be so, as the lay impropriations are scarcely ever bought up, and we are now suffering from a load of capital misplaced in agriculture, so that it needed drawbacks rather than bounties; if however this be the case, make a bargain with the church in the name of peace, and commute them, but do not rob her. It is needless to say that it is no robbery, when all the present incumbents are offered an equivalent; for in the first place, you cannot give us an equivalent for our freeholds; and in the next, you cannot compensate the church in her corporate capacity by the money payment which you offer to us as individuals. "Take the church property," you say, "and sell it for the general good:" "divide the land among the people," say the Spenceans, "and establish an Agrarian republic." The plea is the same in both proposals—the good of the people. In equity Mr. Spence has the advantage, as he is no respecter of persons. Of such sweeping plans, however, Dr. Johnson says, that "no man is more an enemy to public peace than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination by exciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher."—"When Robespierre guillotined the rich landlords to assign their estates to the disposal of the nation, he did no more than draw a very accurate deduction from the principle that had

\* Dr. Cove believes that tithes are not taken in kind in more than one-tenth part of the kingdom. In the diocese of London, containing 568 parishes, tithe was collected in 15 only: and by the agricultural reports of 26 counties, it appeared that not one rector in ten took his tithes in kind, and that the compositions were very moderate.



been established by the first assembly relative to the clergy.\*

"Tithes are a rent charge laid upon their estates by the original proprietors for the maintenance of religion amongst their tenants and vassals; but even supposing them to be originally granted by the crown, does it follow that the crown may justly resume them? If so, it may as certainly resume half the estates of the kingdom. All charters of corporations were given originally by grants from the crown; and if the legislature can resume tithes at pleasure, on that account, she can resume all the estates and all the charters which were ever so given."

"From the united considerations of religion and constitutional policy," says Burke, "the people of England have incorporated and identified the estate of the church with the mass of private property, of which the '*state is not the proprietor*,' either for use or dominion, but the '*guardian only and regulator*.' They have ordained, that the provision of this establishment might be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and should not fluctuate with the Euripus of funds and actions."—On this private property, though it has ever been the Naboth's vineyard of revolutionary leaders and needy statesmen, they cannot trespass without a breach of the eternal laws of justice, and the fundamental laws of the land: and although you would content yourself with robbing the corporation, of which I am a member, of its freeholds, and leave the Duke of Bedford and other lay improprators in possession of that wealth which was transferred in the Sixteenth Century, from a plundered church† to a court favourite, the matter could not stop there: the robbery of the one would very speedily be followed by the spoliation of the other.

The whole course of reasoning in your work is grounded upon the erroneous principle, that the state is

\* De Moleville's Annals of the French Revolution, vol. II. p. 332.

† Lord Bacon declares that "all the Parliaments since the 27th and 31st of Henry VIII. stand obliged to God in conscience to do something for the church; for since they debarred Christ's wife of a great part of her dowry, it were reason that they made her a competent jointure."

the proprietor of the church revenues, and may resume them whenever she will; than which nothing can be more unfounded. "The state," says Burke, "is the guardian and the regulator, but not the proprietor." She can never take possession of them by any other law than that which will enable her to take possession of any other property in the kingdom. The tithes are not, as you seem to suppose, a tax upon an estate, which, like other taxes, may be converted at the pleasure of the legislature; they are, according to Lord Coke, "an ecclesiastical inheritance, collateral to the estate of the land." To compel the clergy to exchange a permanent landed security, inextinguishable without the extinction of the land itself, for an uncertain and fluctuating security, perhaps not durable in itself, even from the operation of redeeming the national debt, and at all times exposed to annihilation by the breath of political convulsion and distress: of this plan it has been remarked, that "to convert the stipend of the clergy to a money payment, and vest their property in the funds, is the wickedest idea a profligate and unprincipled mind ever seriously conceived."\* I should be sorry to apply such virulent language to the offspring of any man's brain; but I certainly must think that the present proposal, in which, though the provision for the clergy is dignified with the title of a rent charge of undoubted security, it is in fact nothing but a tax upon all real property, and of course therefore not so stable as funded security, which is a mortgage upon real property; a tax too which would very soon be as odious as the tithe, paid as unwillingly, and taken away as easily, upon the first financial difficulty, and certainly as justly as in the original spoliation; that such a proposal as this, though I will not call it profligate, is in principle utterly destitute of law and justice.

Having thus far considered its justice, I will proceed to consider its expediency. Now "expediency," according to Dr. Johnson, "is a good rule in *little*

\* See Thoughts on Non-residence quoted in Cove's Inquiry, p. 9.



things, where no other rule has been established ; but as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain." That plan, therefore, which robs the church of her own, and sells it to another, makes *all* right uncertain, and must be inexpedient ; and on this principle I deny the judiciousness of this proposal, but I deny it for many other reasons.

In the first place, the church establishment is called a burden upon the people. I wish, however, to know on what part of the people this burden rests. Not upon the tenant, for if the tithe were taken off, his rent would be increased by a sum equal to the highest ever paid for tithe ; land, tithe-free, is always let at an increase far exceeding the highest rate of tithe. Not upon the landlord, for he either purchased his land at a less price because it was subject to tithe, or inherited it subject to that tax, and valued accordingly, and therefore if you take off the tithe, you make him a present of that which the law never gave, and never can justly give him. Is it then the consumer ? Yes, it may be said, because he pays a higher price for his corn than he would if there was no tithe. Mr. Ricardo, in contradiction to Dr. Smith, says that the tenant and the landlord do not bear the burden of the tithe, but the consumer. "Tithes are a tax on the gross produce of the land, and, like all taxes on raw produce, fall on the consumer." He says, that the farmer is compensated for the expense of tithe by the higher price of his produce, and not by a deduction from his rent ; and that, consequently, when wheat is 80s per quarter without tithe, it must and will rise to 88s with tithe, in order to pay the cultivator the 8s which he pays to the church. But supposing this to be true, which it probably is, the right of tithe is just as sacred as right of rent, and the consumer is no more entitled to demand a diminution of the price of corn by the abolition of tithe, than he has to demand it by the abolition of rent. The tithe is a legal charge upon the land, known to exist previous to cultivation, and not like a new tax imposed subsequent to it, and

therefore it may be theoretically considered as a *sort* of rent, only paid to the clergyman instead of the landlord; and if the consequence of its abolition is to be a proportionable drop in the price of produce, I do not exactly see how the suffering interests of the farmer and the landlord are to be anywise bettered by the change.\*

Your plan, however, for lightening this ecclesiastical burden seems to me, if I understand it rightly, somewhat a singular one: not the abolition, but the sale of tithes; not the alleviation, but the transfer of the weight. In the first place, the lay tithes are left untouched. In the next, it is proposed to sell those of the church, and presumed that they will nearly all be bought up by the owners of the soil, to whom, however, money at four per cent. is very kindly, and as times are, very judiciously offered. And who are to be the gainers? Not the tenants; for either their rents will rise, or the price of produce will fall; not the landlords, for if, in contradiction to Mr. Ricardo, they *should* gain five millions and a half of rent, they would lose it in the payment of their four per cent. loan. But suppose the landlords cannot buy their tithes, (and to do justice to the country they ought to be sold by auction, and then the fundholders will carry the day) what will be the consequence? The tithe will remain in its most odious form, exclusively in the hands of the lay impropiator, whose little finger must always be heavier than the loins of the priest. Who then would be the gainer? I see none but he whose prosperity is already a source of such vexation to the landlord—the fundholder; if indeed he, or any other class of the community, could be gainers by a breach of faith which, by shaking the basis of national security, would poison the source of national wealth, and make us poor indeed.

I do not wish to enter the lists as a champion for

\* According to this doctrine, however, tithes raise the price of corn, and therefore the poor have to give more for it; but then their wages rise in proportion—the poor man receives a greater sum with one hand, and pays it away with the other, and the whole terminates in a fall of the value of money, the effects of which, distributed every where, become imperceptible.



decimation; but yet I must be permitted, on this occasion, to say a few words in behalf of those poor persecuted tithes to which I have naturally a professional attachment, and whose cause we ought not to desert in their dying hour. The English language scarcely supplies an opprobrious epithet which has not been applied to them; and that right which in times of darkness was upheld as divine, is now considered little less than devilish. "Satan himself," says one antagonist, "could not have devised a greater source of mischief in the Christian world than the payment of tithes."\* Now the grand objection to them is, that they are a tax upon produce: but if they are so, does not the ability to pay increase with the produce, and that in a much higher proportion than the tithe? Suppose a farmer pays 10s an acre rent, and gets a crop worth 20s, he pays 2s tithe, and has 8s profit; suppose his crop worth £20, he pays, it is true, £2 tithe, but his profit amounts to £17. 10s, and thus, though his tithe increases as twenty to one, his profit increases in a higher proportion than forty to one. Again, take the following statement from the Anti-jacobin Review, vol. II. p. 93: "A man occupies ten acres of impoverished land, which yields only one quarter of wheat per acre, sold at 40s the quarter, this pays the tenant £18, and the tithe owner £2, exclusive of straw; suppose the tenant spends £100 in improving this land, and gets the following year three quarters an acre instead of one—no extraordinary increase, the tithe owner gets £6, but the tenant £54, or £36 per cent. exclusive of the straw, and this the very year it was expended, without adverting to the advantages which will be felt for several years following. I am very well assured that it cannot be denied, upon any fair argument, that if nine-tenths do not pay the occupier for improving land already in tillage, the tithe owner, who prevents by his claim the attempt

\* There is at least this justice in tithes,—that where there is no produce there is no demand; and the demand must be exactly proportioned to the produce; this therefore precludes the possibility of rapacity; and all such accusations against the clergy are not only false, but known to be so the moment they are uttered.

to improve, is not the enemy but the friend of the tenant:" and it is somewhat droll, when the country is overstocked with arable land, and the market glutted with superfluous corn, to hold out as an advantage of this larcenous plan, that "the tenant, if unshackled by tithe, will put into tillage lands which the fear of tithe keeps unimproved;" when the fact is, that in spite of the pretended impediment of tithes, more lands have been put under tillage than we know what to do with, and there is scarcely a common left in the country for the cottager to feed a goose upon.

"The increase of our wheaten tillage alone," says Cove, "must have extended over at least 800,000 acres, and by its produce, at three quarters per acre, afforded bread to 2,400,000 persons."—Chalmers says that "during the late reign at least 3,500,000 acres of waste were brought into cultivation."

Mr. Ricardo says, that the consumer pays the tithe. Now if he really does pay the full tenth, the farmer is unquestionably a great gainer by the arrangement: for *he* certainly does not pay *one-sixteenth* to the clergyman; and I have no doubt but that this is in some measure the case; I have no doubt but that the farmer makes use of the tithe as a plea to demand either from the landlord or the consumer more than he is entitled to, and puts the surplus into his pocket. If the consumer pays this surplus, both tenant and landlord are the gainers: if the landlord pays it, then the tenant alone; and thus far tithes may be a benefit instead of being an impediment to agriculture. "Tithes," says Mr. Howlett, "enable the lower class of tenants to better their condition, because from the course of things the clergy never receive the full value of their tithe, and therefore the difference between that full value and the actual receipt goes every year to augment the capital of the farmer, and the food of the labourer."\*

What discouragement to agriculture then ought tithes to offer, and what in fact do they offer?

\* Howlett's Influence of Tithe upon Agriculture.



Are the tenants on tithe-free lands better off than on those that pay tithe? There is a 'tithe-free estate close to my parish, which I believe is one of the worst cultivated, and I know has had more broken tenants upon it within the last eight years than any estate in the hundred. "The English peasant is as well off as the Scotch. England, where tithe is strict, is as well cultivated as Scotland, where there is none. The peasantry of the Canton of Berne, whose freedom from bigotry is quoted in the 'Remarks' with such just pleasure, were always very wealthy, and yet before the French Revolution they paid tithe, in its worst form, as a tax to the state. Sicily was subject to a tithe, so regulated by the *Leges Gelonicæ*, that it was impossible for the farmer to withhold a grain, and yet Sicily was the granary of Rome."\* The tenant, I believe, is the last person to suffer by the tithe: its influence is felt by the landlord, according to Adam Smith, and by the consumer, according to Ricardo. "Taxes on the produce of land," says Dr. Smith, "are in reality taxes upon rent; and though they may be originally advanced by the farmer, are finally paid by the landlord."—"It appears," say the Edinburgh reviewers, "that in every state of society, whether rents are high or low, and whether they are paid in kind or in money, the charge of the tithes is defrayed *entirely by the consumers of raw produce*;" vol. xxxiv. Which is right, or which is wrong, I have not skill to determine; but I am sure that none of them have a right to be exempted from the payment of a revenue which belongs to the church by a title coeval with our existence as a nation.

Having been tempted by this golden apple to diverge from my course, and to touch upon a matter irrelevant to this discussion, inasmuch as you have not the merit of wishing to abolish or commute, but simply to sell, a certain portion of the tithes, I will return to the subject, and proceed to consider the expediency of your proposals.

\* Letter to W. Wellesley Pole, on Irish Tithes.

You and Senor Gisbert (who, in the true spirit of modern liberty, was excessively angry with the president of the Cortes for permitting a brother deputy to speak his mind) are of opinion, that an ecclesiastic has no right to any real property; and you think that the numerous clergymen who spend such vast sums in "the attractive, tranquil, and luxurious city of Bath," would be very beneficially displaced by the squires who would succeed to the revenues of the church by buying them with money borrowed at four per cent. Now it strikes me, that this opinion may be partially true respecting the old Roman Catholic establishment, which was a sort of imperium in imperio, not paying its due proportion to the exigences of the state, and withdrawing a vast multitude of men from the active population, by making them monks, and friars, and celibate priests; \* but is a mere prejudice when applied to a Protestant church, which is a profession much like other professions, supporting a body of gentlemen, who contribute, it is said, more than any class of men to the population, and who contribute as other gentlemen do to the wealth and happiness of the community in which they live: and I think, moreover, that not only have churchmen a right to real property, but that in England they are the most useful owners in the state; that they are "active proprietors," and not, as the Sicilian documents call their clergy, "inert possessors;" and that "the attractive, tranquil, and luxurious city of Bath," had better be enriched by the occasional residence of a body of wealthy clergymen, than by a herd of laymen, "whose talk is of bullocks."†

Should it be considered that in the course of these observations I speak with too much levity of the awful duties of that sacred profession to which I belong, and seem to consider the performance of them as a matter

\* It is said that there were in France under the old regime 2,000,000 ecclesiastical persons, including Nuns, &c. out of 20,000,000 souls, or one-tenth of the people.

† Ecclesiasticus, xxxviii. 25.



of little consequence when compared with the risk of our worldly wealth; it must not be imagined that I am really insensible to the responsibility that rests upon us, or that I am base enough to consider that we are entitled, as unconditional proprietors, to eat the bread of idleness—far otherwise. Every man is responsible to God for that property which is the gift of God. But what is their responsibility in comparison with ours? What obligation can be conceived so sacred, what duty so solemn, as that which binds us, who are partakers at the altar, to wait upon it, and to preach the gospel by which we live? It is for the sake of the present argument only that I press upon the inviolability of our secular rights, and omit the consideration of our religious duties.

In the first place, I am utterly unable to comprehend on what possible grounds it can be insinuated, that the clergy of this kingdom are “inert possessors,” instead of “active proprietors.” They contribute their equal proportion of taxes to the defence of the state and the wants of the poor; and if their glebes are not so well cultivated as other lands, this might easily be obviated by their granting leases of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years. We pay, I believe, a greater portion of productive labourers; we are, in the opinion of our adversaries at least, men of luxurious and self-indulgent habits; fond of good roads, good living, and warm snug houses; and all these propensities are productive of benefit to the working classes. I myself, for instance, have spent several hundred pounds, not merely in the repairs, but in the improvement of my house, to the great benefit of the carpenter and mason, both productive labourers: I do what I can to facilitate communication by the improvement of the roads for my own comfort; and of the income which I receive from my parish, I believe scarcely any is spent out of it. Now what possible advantage can the state derive by turning me into a pensioner of £250 a year; by robbing me of the property which I hold by so indefeasible a title, and selling it to a man who certainly will not spend any of it in the parish, and who



is at full liberty to spend the whole of it in "the attractive, tranquil, and luxurious city of Rome," or the noisy, dirty, and profligate city of Paris.

Equally unable am I to comprehend the force of Adam Smith's reasoning, when he says, the richer the church the poorer the state. "The rent of land," says he, "is considered as the sole or principal fund from which in all great monarchies the exigencies of the state are supplied; and the tithe is a real land-tax which puts it out of the power of the proprietors to contribute so largely to the defence of the state as they otherwise might do." Granted: but what does this signify, if the ecclesiastic pays the difference? The landlord contributes, suppose, upon his nine-tenths, and the priest upon the remaining tenth; how then is the state the loser? And how can it be true, as he afterwards says, that "the more of this fund (*viz.* rent) that is given to the church, the less it is evident can be spared to the state;" when that which is given to the church contributes just as much as that which remains with the landlord. Rent may be the sole fund from which the exigencies of the state are supplied, and part of this rent belongs to the church; but it contributes its share to the defence of the state, and is spent freely by its receivers. It is not a *caput mortuum*, it is not withdrawn from the national income, and sunk, as it were, in an ecclesiastical quicksand. If part of the produce of the land and labour of any community must produce revenue, why may not a clergyman have a portion of that revenue instead of giving it *all* to noblemen and squires? Why are you, in contradiction to all received opinions, and from a mere blind prejudice against ecclesiastics, to say that it is beneficial to the country to give the whole revenue of the land to a lay proprietor, who generally spends it out of the parish, instead of giving one-tenth to another proprietor, who must spend it on the spot in which it is produced? In the property-tax returns the ecclesiastical tenth appeared as conspicuously as the lay nine-tenths; and the tithes are rated most heavily to the main-

tenance of the poor.\* The tithe, according to Adam Smith, is a part of the rent, at any rate it is a part of the revenue, of the land, and it is equally taxed in every way with the rest, contributing equally to the exigencies of the community; only it happens to be in the hands of ecclesiastics instead of laymen, and therefore it is called a burden on the people.

As the pages of the "Remarks" are crowded with quotations from the writings and speeches of renegade Spanish priests, Portuguese journalists, Sicilian economists, theoretical emperors, and English republicans, I will beg permission to enlist on my side a Whig of no small celebrity, and claim the weight of his venerable name and powerful arguments in behalf of a cause too likely to suffer by the insignificance and weakness of my own. Of church property, Mr. Burke, speaking as the representative of the English nation, says, "we maintain that some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed in contributing to the modest splendour of religion and the dignity of its ministers, as in fomenting the luxury and swelling the pride of laymen: that we attach our gentry to religion, and liberalize churchmen by enabling them to live upon an equality with the leading characters of the country; that the teachers of religion will have but little influence with aristocratic wealth, and much less so with new-born greatness, if they appear in a manner no way assorted to those with whom they must associate, and whom occasionally they are bound to censure and reprove, in a country where even voluntary poverty has lost its credit, and where constrained mediocrity would breed contempt. For these reasons," says he, "we will not banish religion, like something we are ashamed to shew, to obscure municipalities and rustic villages; no, we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments, we will have *her mixed*

\* By means of poor rates, tithes contribute to the expenses of cultivation: according to the present iniquitous plan, the farmer only pays his labourers a part of their wages, and sends them to the overseers for the rest; so that tithe owners, householders, and small farmers pay through the poor rates a share of the wages of the great farmers' workmen.

*throughout the whole mass of life, and blended with all the classes of society.* We can see without pain a Bishop of Durham or of Winchester in possession of ten thousand a year, and cannot conceive why it is in worse hands than estates to the like amount in the hands of this earl or that squire; although it may be true that so many dogs and horses are not kept by the former, and fed with the victuals that ought to nourish the children of the poor. When the commonwealth has once established the estates of the church as property, it can *consistently hear nothing of the more or the less*; too much or too little is treason against property. What evil can arise from the quantity in any hand, while the Supreme Authority has the full superintendence over it to prevent any species of abuse, and whenever it notably deviates to give it a direction agreeable to the purposes of its institution? In England most of us conceive that it is envy and malignity towards those who are often the beginners of their own fortune, and not a love of the self-denial and mortification of the ancient church, that makes some men look askance at the distinctions, and honours, and revenues which, taken from no person, are set apart for virtue . . . . . We shall believe those reformers to be then honest enthusiasts, not as we now think them cheats and deceivers, when we see them throwing their own goods into common, and submitting their own persons to the austere discipline of the early church."

Thus says Burke, and I need not fear to place his name in opposition to any one cited in the Remarks, or be ashamed of those arguments in which he maintains the sacredness of private property, and the wisdom of confiding it to the hands of churchmen. The primitive poverty of the clergy was supported by the primitive purity of the laity; and when the believers had all things in common, there was but little need of a settled maintenance for the pastors; but when poverty and zeal began to go out of fashion, and God had withdrawn his miraculous influence from the church, leaving it thenceforth to the less assisted co-operation of man, it was soon found necessary to supply the defect of



voluntary oblations by legal provisions. The English clergyman is, and may he ever remain so, an English gentleman; once turn him into a pensioner at £250 or £350 a year, and this is lost. It is the inequality which is complained of, the lottery of the church that induces so many to qualify themselves for orders by so long, laborious, and expensive an education. "Do but level these preferments," says Bentley, "and they will soon become as level in their learning; for instead of the flower of English youth, you will only have the refuse sent to your academies, and those too cramped and crippled in their studies for want of aim and emulation. A few shining dignities in our church, prebends, deaneries, and bishopricks, are the pious fraud that induces and decoys the parents to risk their child's fortune in it."\* God forbid that I should recommend the meanness and wickedness of turning religion into a trade, or propose the ministry merely as a means of getting a livelihood. The great object of it should be the communication of religious knowledge, and the improvement of mankind. But constituted as the world is, I know that it must at the same time be considered as a means of getting a maintenance in the honest and faithful discharge of it; and that all idea of gratuitous service or inadequate provision is theoretical and absurd, even when sincere; but is much worse than absurd when, as is too frequently the case, it proceeds from the cold-blooded intention of overturning religion itself by the destruction of an established church; and from the hostility which some must always feel against those who are paid to support the cause of religious truth, and who, to the confusion of their adversaries, have hitherto proved themselves worthy of their hire.

The English church is, like her king and her nobility, independent, and God grant she may ever remain so, without having to trust to the precarious bounty of lukewarm professors, or the fluctuating value of a pecuniary tax. By means of the lay advowsons her

\* Phileleutherus Lipsiensis.

clergy are neither dependent on the mitre nor the crown; by the inequality of her livings, they are suited to all classes of society; while the prospect of distant emoluments induces many to devote their talents to a service which otherwise they must decline. Were its income degraded to the proposed level, its offices would then devolve upon men of meaner abilities, rank and education, to whom these reduced emoluments would be an object; and what in process of time would be the state of religion in this wealthy and fastidious country, they may easily enough divine, who witness the supercilious indifference with which the poorer clergy are regarded, by those who are most disposed to grudge the church her honours and her wealth. It is the cant of the present day to complain of the secular habits of the English clergy, and to uphold the necessity of excluding them from all civil employments; their bishops from parliament, and themselves from every office but the cure of souls. For a good reason, no doubt, as the spoliation of their property would be much more easily effected. But this is the only benefit that could arise from it. I do not mean to assert, God forbid I should, that the clergy should be men of pleasure, or men of the world; that they should be Bath loungers, or London rakes. Abate the nuisance of pluralities, and keep us in our parishes, and prevent us, when there, from becoming mere farmers or mere squires; but do not think you serve the cause of morals or religion by excluding us totally from secular affairs.

It has always been considered as one of the greatest blessings of this country to have a class of country gentlemen of moderate properties resident upon their estates, and the general residence of such small proprietors has been looked upon as one of the chief causes of our prosperity, and upon this principle I say that it would be subversive of the best interests of the state to suppress (and this plan would be a suppression) a whole class of men who have at least a right to be considered as country gentlemen; and who, as far as residence and general utility are concerned, are, even in a secular view, as valuable a



body of men as any in the kingdom. The clergy, generally speaking, (and I need not here advert to the dishonorable exceptions) combine the useful qualities of the private gentleman and the parish priest. They fill all such civil offices as their local knowledge peculiarly qualifies them for, and at the same time they are able, and I hope generally not unwilling, to follow the footsteps of their blessed Master in the proper work of an Evangelist, to preach the gospel, and superintend the education of the poor—to alleviate the mental agonies of struggling penitents—to smooth the bed of death, and administer the consolations of religion to incurable and otherwise hopeless infirmity. Their civil employments, and consequent intercourse with the world, free them from sectarian bigotry and vulgar enthusiasm, from the monkish and ascetic habits of some Christian ministers, while their religious duties prevent them from becoming mere men of the world. If they are disposed to do good, their means of doing so are two-fold. If they fail in this, they ought to be made to do it; and there is no want of laws, if duly executed, to compel the performance of it. More than this, for the sake of my present argument, I do not ask you to grant me—I do not ask you to acknowledge that there are amongst them not unfrequent instances of men who do no less honour to humanity than to the pure and perfect religion they profess; who shew themselves, by fervent faith and unostentatious zeal, to be the genuine disciples of our Lord and Saviour; that their writings have served, beyond those of any other set of men, to check the mad career of blasphemy and atheism, and that in spite of their secular habits, there has not been a more learned body in the world.

As to the non-residence of wealthy pluralists, and the shamefully inadequate salaries of stipendiary curates, a remedy has been applied, certainly not before it was wanted, and possibly not altogether commensurate with the evil it is intended to correct. The readers of the Remarks should know, that by the last Residence Act a gradation of salaries, the lowest of which is £80, if the living shall be so much, and



varying in amount according to the value and population of the parish, is peremptorily enjoined upon all future incumbents; and thus the wealthy pluralists are forced to provide handsomely for their curates, while the small livings are, in case of non-residence, not worth holding, so that such an abuse as is mentioned in p. 17 of the Remarks will not be probable, even in description.

Judge then of the effects which this plan for transferring the property of the clergy to the laity would produce. The money which now *must generally, and ought always*, to be spent in the parishes, might be carried off to London, Bath, Paris, Rome, or Naples. The blessing which is derived from a resident clergy deriving income from land, and spending it where it is drawn, would be lost; and that equal and immediate diffusion which ensues, and which is so highly beneficial to the productive classes, and consequently to the state, would be gone for the sake of swelling the pride, and fomenting the luxury of lay fundholders, squires, and peers. "What benefit does Scotland derive from the poverty of her clergy? Her rents were high; her landlords are worse off than ours; her labourers are driven to emigration; and the income spent in her is diminished by almost every shilling taken from the clergy." The landed proprietor profits by the abolition of tithe, and spends that profit perhaps in England. It is calculated by the author of the Letter to the present Lord Maryborough in 1810, that if the Scotch clergy had better incomes, and from tithe, more than £500,000 would be annually spent in Scotland, and in the places from which it is drawn; while the farmer, from whose land the income was derived, would be benefited by having it spent in his neighbourhood, instead of its being taken to London or Edinburgh. Of the Highlands, Col. David Stewart says, "owing to the want of resident proprietors, the inhabitants are left without a man of talent, or of sufficient influence from rank or education, to settle the most ordinary disputes, or capable of acting as a justice of the peace, or of signing those certificates

and affidavits which the law requires. In extensive districts, containing two, three, and four thousand persons each, not more than one or two, or perhaps none, of the ancient rank of gentlemen tacksmen remain: these few are the only individuals capable of acting as justices of the peace; and pensioners and others, who wish to make affidavits, must travel thirty or forty miles for that purpose.

"The want of magistrates, however, is a trifling grievance in comparison of leaving a population so numerous and virtuous open to an inundation of *political and religious tracts of ignorant and pretended teachers of the gospel*, and of agents of the white slave trade. The itinerant preachers of the new light disseminate hostility to the character and doctrines of the established clergy; while the agents of the emigrant vessels are most active in contrasting the boasted happiness, ease and freedom, to be enjoyed in America, with what they call the oppression of their landlords."\*

It is far from being true, that the church and people of Scotland are in that state of virtue and religious peace that the enemies of the church of England describe. Schism has not certainly reached that orgasm of vulgarity and fanaticism that it has in this country; but the peace of most parishes is disturbed by intrusive gossellers, and the chapel rises in most ominous opposition to the kirk; while in the Highlands, by Col. Stewart's account, the number of the clergy is shamefully inadequate to the wants of the people.

Mr. Brougham says, in his speech on the education of the poor, that in Scotland there are parishes fifteen miles in length, and six in breadth. This, if the object is to get rid of clerical interference, must be the ne plus ultra of excellence, as a clergyman would be puzzled to superintend the spiritual concerns of such a district. The same gentleman attributes the orderly habits of the Scotch peasantry to the parochial schools, and the non-existence of poor laws; observing, that if the English schools were better regulated, "he would

\* Sketches, &c. of the Highlands, vol. I. p. 136.



not say that there would not be a pauper or a criminal in England, but he could say that Scotland or Switzerland would not have fewer than England, even in seaport towns." Previous to 1803, the amount of education in Scotland was nearly 1-10th of the population—in England, 1-21st; which is sufficient to account for a difference of character, without laying it on the clergy.

"Suppose Ireland had no tithes, the rents would immediately rise, and the annual absentee expenditure, which is rated at £3,000,000, would no doubt be increased by one-fifth of the rent, and £600,000 would thus be added to the sums already drawn annually from that hapless country by absentees."\* These are the blessings which would accrue to England in the present madness for foreign residence, by the adoption of a plan which has for its object an increase of the public weal; and to the millions which are already drawn from her bosom to be lavished upon foreigners, would be added by this act of spoliation a portion of that property which, by the present laws, must be spent at home. What the public revenue, or the private happiness of the community, would gain by the transfer, I am still unenlightened enough to be utterly unable to conceive.

If France, and Spain, and Italy, and the whole world besides, choose to have a beggarly clergy, what is that to us? They have come to us for models of legislation, and we need not attempt to copy theirs until a little experience shall have proved their superiority. America has no established church; but America has no king; and even if her experiment *was* more than forty years old, and *had* stood the test of time, I would neither wish to imitate her in one exemption or the other. What is there in the morals or the manners of America that an Englishman need wish to imitate? What pattern of faith or works need the Christian seek in a country "where the bulk of the population, left to their own discretion, both in faith and practice, have wandered, as might be ex-

\* Letter to W. Wellesley Pole.



pected, to the remotest extremes of error, and exhibited but little medium between sectarian fanaticism and the most barbarous irreligion."\* As you have quoted Bristed, I will quote him too. "The general government has no power to interfere with, or regulate the religion of the union; and the States generally have not legislated further than to incorporate with certain restrictions such religious bodies as have applied for a charter. In consequence of this entire indifference on the part of the state, fully one-third of our whole population is destitute of all religious ordinances, and a much greater proportion in our southern and western districts."†—"The late president, Dwight, declared in 1812, that there were three millions of souls in the United States entirely destitute of all religious ordinances and worship. It is also asserted, by good authority, that in the southern and western States societies exist, built on the model of the transalpine clubs in Italy, and the atheistical assemblies of France and Germany, and, like them, incessantly labouring to root out every vestige of Christianity.

"Indeed many serious people doubt the permanence of the federal constitution, because in that national compact there is no reference to the providence of God; we, the people, being the constitutional substitute for Jehovah.

"Of national religion we have not much to boast . . . the greater number of the States declare it to be unconstitutional to refer to the providence of God in any of their public acts; and Virginia carries this doctrine so far as not to allow any chaplain to officiate in her state legislature; giving as a reason, by an overwhelming majority of her representatives in December, 1817, that the constitution permits no one religious sect to have preference to any other; and therefore, as a chaplain must belong to some sect, it would be unconstitutional for the Virginian legislator to listen to his prayers or preaching.

\* Fausset's Bampton Lectures.

† Bristed's America, chap. VII. p. 413, London edition.

"In the winter of 1814-15, the legislature of Louisiana rejected, by an immense majority, a bill 'For the better observance of the sabbath; for punishing the crime of sodomy; for preventing the defacing of churches; for shutting the stores and theatres on Sundays:' the chief opposer of the bill declaring, on the legislative floor, 'that such persecuting intolerance might well suit the New England puritans, who were descended from the bigoted fanatics of Old England, who were readers of the bible, and *consequently* ignorant, prejudiced, cold-blooded, false, and cruel; but could never be fastened on the more enlightened, liberal, and *philosophical* inhabitants of Louisiana, the descendants of Frenchmen.'"<sup>\*</sup>

"Sanctuary," says Dr. Mason, "they have none; they lose, by degrees, their anxiety for the institutions of Christ; their feeble substitutes, the small social meetings, without the minister of grace, soon die away; their sabbaths are pagan; their children grow up in ignorance, vice, and unbelief; their land, which smiles around them like the garden of God, presents one unbroken scene of spiritual desolation; in the course of one or two generations the knowledge of God is almost obliterated; the name of Jesus is a foreign sound; his salvation an occult science . . . we have already a population of some millions of our own colour, flesh and blood, nearly as destitute of evangelical mercies as the savage who yells on the banks of the Missouri."<sup>†</sup>

"When I arrived at Albion," says Mr. Flower, "a more disorganized demoralized state of society never existed: the English played at cricket, the backswordsmen shot at marks, and the Sunday ended in riot and fighting."—Of the Shakers, at Albion, Mr. Tell Harris says, "the essentials of their creed are nearly allied to blasphemy; and the admission to the holy state of matrimony is so opposite to any thing like decency, that none but the filthiest pen could prostitute itself in detailing it." Of their worship, consisting of frantic

<sup>\*</sup> Bristed's America, p. 394.

<sup>†</sup> Dr. Mason's Plea for Catholic Communion, p. 388.



gesticulations and loud roarings, with a chorus of "lo diddle, ho diddle, lo diddle, ho!" he says, that "a stranger could not suppose them any other than unfortunates, who had eluded the vigilance of their keepers."\*—"Whatever degree of religious information exists in Philadelphia," says Mr. Fearon, "is confined to the clergy" (Sketches, p. 168): and of the worship at Ebenezer church he says, "notwithstanding my warm love of liberty, I felt, that were I an absolute lawgiver, I would certainly punish and restrain men who thus degraded their nature, who set so wicked an example of religious blasphemy, and so sorely libelled the name and character of revelation" (Do. p. 166).

As for the countless sects, "they differ," says the same writer, "essentially from the English sectaries in being more solemnly bigoted, more intolerant, and more ignorant of the scriptures . . . a cold uniform bigotry seems to pervade all parties . . . can it be possible that the non-existence of religious oppression has lessened religious knowledge, and made men superstitiously dependent upon outward form, instead of internal purity. In Philadelphia, all native Americans who have any shade of colour darker than white, are not admitted into the churches visited by whites. There exists a penal law deeply written in the minds of the whole white population, which subjects their coloured fellow-citizens to unconditional contumely and never-ceasing insult" (Do. p. 167).

Such are the descriptions which are given by red-hot English reformers of the morals, manners, and religion of America; and yet this is the people which, in your opinion, is "at least as religious as the English;" this the land in which "it is a matter of notoriety that a growing attention is paid to religion;" and where the "number of steeples" produces an effect, "at the same time cheering to the sight, and satisfactory to the mind of the friend of general Christianity."

\* See Remarks in America, by William Tell Harris, p. 121.



This also is the nation that "the young men now at Eton" are to see surpassing us in the numbers of her people and her seamen. This the freedom which it is necessary for us to attain before we can contend with her in the race of glory: a freedom from every restraint, religious and moral; an exemption from the necessity of paying national homage to him "who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." It may be so, America may be destined to surpass us by deserting the national religion and government of her forefathers; and should it be so, God's will be done: but let England say to her, in the words of Joshua,— "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye whom ye will serve, whether the God which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua, xxiv. 15).

With respect to France and her degraded clergy, obliged to eke out a shabby state pension of £30 a year, by contributions forced from the fears or pity of the people; would any religious man that has seen the state they are in ever wish for a similar confiscation here? And if our financial difficulties necessitate a sacrifice, that sacrifice should be made by all. Let us remember what you say of the clergy of the church of Rome:—"The clergy have now the same rights as other subjects; the same laws protect all." Be it so. The clergy of the church of England have the same right to their property that the monarch has to his throne; the same laws protect their right. It cannot, therefore, be just, expedient, or necessary, to rob them of it. England is not to be saved by an act of fraud. She may compete with the regenerated strength of France, or the youthful vigour of America, without sacrificing her honour: nor will she, I hope, ever need the *partial* plunder of her subjects to support her in the struggle she has to maintain with the envy of her rivals, or the malice of her foes.

I will conclude this part of my Letter by demanding for the church, that toleration which is so loudly demanded by others for themselves. The bitterest gall that ever flowed from the pen of the most sanguinary bigot is nothing to the venom that is daily spit from the English press upon the characters and conduct of the English clergy. We are loaded with opprobrious nicknames; we are threatened with the confiscation of our property, and the degradation of our order; and the only thing for which we have to thank our adversaries is, that they do not play the hypocrite with us, that they honestly tell us what they will do when they have the power. Fair and candid inquiry into our conduct we ought to court; but from this moral persecution (for to be slandered, sneered at, and threatened with poverty and disgrace, is a persecution) we have a right to be free; because, with the exception of our supposed wealth, I know not what crime we commit to deserve it. We preach, to be sure, and sometimes publish loyal sermons; but nobody is obliged either to hear or read them: and if we have no other title to forbearance, we have at least that which, in the words of Locke, requires "every man to treat with respect the usages and customs of his country," and not, under the pretence of free discussion, to cover with indiscriminate libel a profession consecrated to the purposes of religion.

Having thus far considered the justice and expediency of this proposal for the spoliation of the church, I will proceed, in conclusion, to treat very shortly of the calculations upon which it is founded; and to shew that, if any belief is to be given to authors of acknowledged credit and research, its exaggerations are too great to allow it any claim to consideration as a practicable plan for the relief of the community.

Upon a loose estimate in the Morning Chronicle of what the ecclesiastical income ought to be, it is taken for granted that it really is £7,600,000, a valuation which probably exceeds the real amount by about £4,637,000. The Irish revenues are equally exaggerated, amounting, according to Dr. Cove, to only



£676,000 per annum. The estimate of the Morning Chronicle bears absurdity so completely on the face of it, that a contradiction may almost be superfluous; but when it appears that, if it was true, the average value of all the livings in England would be £860 a year, nothing more I think need be said to prove its incorrectness. The tithe in those calculations is estimated at £8,204,000: now there are 10,000 parishes in England, exclusive perhaps of about 1500 chapelries, &c. which have no tithe; of these 10,000 parishes, fully 500 are town livings, having no connexion with tithes; and therefore the number supported by tithes is 9500, and the £8,204,000 of the Morning Chronicle divided amongst these 9500 livings, will give each of them more than £860 a year in tithes alone—a valuation which nobody who knew any thing about the matter would ever have put in print;\* according to your abatement, there would be more than £650 a year to each, an estimate sufficiently remote from the real average of about £250 to deprive it of any pretension to accuracy.

Having adverted to this palpable exaggeration, I will proceed to relate such details as have been made public on the income of the church from actual returns and other sources of information. In 1795, Bishop Watson, an accurate calculator, and no high churchman, rated the income of the church at £1,500,000; and in 1798, Dr. Cove says that this valuation was not much under the mark. From actual returns of the aggregate amount of 3181 livings, whose value was collected from 1787 to 1797, their average was £141 per ann. each; and by another average, taken from the actual value of a considerable number of livings in two particular counties remote from each other, one inland and fertile, the other maritime and highly cultivated, the values were, each rectory £193 per annum, and each vicarage £141. Comparing then these computations with each other, and setting the fruitful part of England against the unfruitful, he calculated that

\* If to this £860 we add the glebes and surplice fees at £40, the average will be £900 a year—a still more monstrous absurdity.



the income of the parochial clergy at that time had not increased since the Reformation in a greater proportion than that of twelve to one, and stated it thus:—

|                                          |                   |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| The Parochial Livings .....              | £1,350,000        |
| The Bishopricks .....                    | 72,000            |
| The Deans and Chapters, &c. ....         | 140,000           |
| The Universities .....                   | 180,000           |
| Total Income of the Clergy in 1798 ..... | <u>£1,742,000</u> |

In Hare's sermon before the Archdeacon of Gloucester, in 1799, the clergy were computed at 18,000, and their incomes at £88. 10s per annum for each. In 1798, Mr. Pitt, on proposing the property-tax, estimated the annual rent of land, deducting one-fifth, at £20,000,000; the tenant's income, deducting two-thirds rack rent, at £6,000,000; and the tithes, deducting one-fifth, at £4,000,000. But Dr. Beeke, in his publication on the income-tax, a work of great research and acknowledged credit, proved this estimate to be greatly over-charged, and reckons their annual produce at £2,850,000.\* In 1812, Mr. Colquhoun's estimate of the revenues of the united churches of England and Ireland is this:—

|                                     |            |                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 48 Bishopricks, average income ...  | £5010..... | £240,480          |
| 1500 dignified Clergy, ditto. ....  | 720 ...    | 1,080,000         |
| 17,500 inferior Clergy, ditto ..... | 200 ...    | 3,500,000         |
|                                     |            | <u>£4,820,480</u> |

Now Colquhoun is never suspected of being under the mark in his calculations; he is accused indeed of ridiculously over-stating them; and yet at a time when he rated the annual produce of agriculture in Great Britain and Ireland at £216,817,624, and in 1812, when the average price of wheat for the last four years had been 108s the quarter, he only rated the income of

\* As the tithes, lay and ecclesiastical, in the property-tax returns never, I believe, exceeded £2,732,000, the superior accuracy of Dr. Beeke's calculation is sufficiently proved.

the two churches at £4,820,480, which, calculating as you do, the Irish church at about one-sixth of the English, would leave to the latter about £4,000,000 a year.\* There can be no question however of this being very greatly exaggerated even then, and of course very much more so now when wheat is 48s a quarter.

In the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, the total revenue of the church is computed at about 3,000,000, which in good times was perhaps nearly the truth, but now is much above it.

From this we may proceed to a consideration of the property-tax returns, and see what notion they will give us of the value of the tithes:—

|                                                               |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| In 1806 the Return from Lands under }<br>Schedule A was ..... | £29,834,484 |
| From Tithes, lay and ecclesiastical .....                     | 2,012,064   |
| In 1810, Lands .....                                          | 29,500,000  |
| Tithes .....                                                  | 2,360,000   |
| In 1812, Lands .....                                          | 32,816,753  |
| Tithes .....                                                  | 2,583,672   |

And by return of the same year the rental of England and Wales was discriminated as follows, with regard to tithes:—

|                                                               |            |    |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|-------------------|
| Tithe free in toto .....                                      | £8,805,530 | 5s | 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d |
| part .....                                                    | 862,960    | 18 | 8                 |
| Free on payment of a modus .....                              | 539,243    | 10 | 10                |
| Titheable .....                                               | 22,518,874 | 0  | 2 $\frac{1}{4}$   |
| <hr/>                                                         |            |    |                   |
| Amount of Composition for Tithes }<br>and Tithes leased ..... | 32,726,608 | 15 | 4                 |
| <hr/>                                                         |            |    |                   |
| £2,117,451 17 2                                               |            |    |                   |
| <hr/>                                                         |            |    |                   |

\* In this estimate, however, the church of Scotland is included, and therefore £260,000 must be deducted from this £4,000,000, reducing it to £3,740,000.

In 1814 the property-tax returns were—

|                                                                            |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Lands .....                                                                | £39,405,705  |
| Tithes .....                                                               | 2,732,898    |
| And by a return in the same year the Tithe-<br>able Land is rated at ..... | } 23,268,733 |
| Composition for Tithes and Tithes leased ...                               |              |
|                                                                            | 2,231,910    |

This is the highest return of the whole, and although the average price of wheat had previously been 108s the quarter, the return of tithes, lay and ecclesiastical is only £2,732,898.

Now I am no great political economist, and cannot draw such deductions from the foregoing documents as possibly might be drawn; but upon the mere view of them, I should be glad to ask, what becomes of Mr. Bristed's £15,000,000, the *Morning Chronicle's* £8,204,000, or of your £7,600,000? And I should like to know what sort of an appearance the poor gentlemen of England would make if they were compelled to borrow money to purchase the church property at such a valuation? My firm belief is, that they would be forced to pay nearly £100,000,000 more than it is actually worth, to the great relief, no doubt, of their present embarrassments. I am credibly informed, from estimates which do not rest upon the vague calculations of a newspaper, but from actual returns of the value of the livings, which must annually be made under the last Residence Act, that the whole amount of the church property, including, what need not fairly be included, the universities, would only give the clergy an average income of £200 per annum. It is calculated that if the revenue of all the parochial livings in England were equally divided, there would be £150 a year to each: if the cathedral revenues were added, about £17 a year more; and if the bishopricks, archbishopricks and universities were included, £200 a year in all; so that the Scotch church averages richer than the English. According to Dr. Cove, there is no Scotch benefice below £180 a year, including the glebe, and four-fifths of the benefices average £300;



the whole body of Scotch clergy, in number 936, having a revenue of £260,000 per annum, or £278 per annum a piece. In your work it is estimated that the tithes may be nearly one-third of the rent. Now the author of a very sensible letter in the *Edinburgh Farmer's Magazine*, vol. III. p. 421, which I would advise you to read before you publish a third edition of your work, calculates thus: "Tithes," says he, "being one-tenth of the produce, may be reckoned equal to one-fifth of the rent or of the land; but as the payment of them may be avoided in a multitude of ways, they cannot be computed at more than one-seventh of the titheable land, or one-eighth of the whole." In the absence of proofs, one assertion is as good as another.\*

Having applied to the foregoing documents in order to acquire some general notion of the accuracy of your details, I will now proceed to collect from the third edition of Dr. Cove's *Essay on the Revenues of the Church of England*, published in 1816, such estimates as may bring us nearer to the truth. This is a bulky octavo volume, full of minute calculations upon the actual value of church property in England, with the proportion that the tithes bear to the rental of the kingdom; a computation of the numbers of the clergy, and a comparison of their incomes with those of the Scotch, Irish, and Swiss church. A work, therefore, which perhaps ought to have been known to the author of a *Plan for Altering the Revenues of the Church of England*, inasmuch as it may at least be supposed to contain more information upon the subject than the *Clerical Directory*, which confessedly

\* The false notions respecting the wealth of the English church arise from considering merely a few shining dignities, such as the Bishopsricks of Durham and Winchester, and forgetting the far greater number of benefices that are below mediocrity. "Sir William Scott," say the *Edinburgh reviewers*, "has made it very clear by his excellent speech, that it is not possible in the present state of the revenues of the English church to apply a radical cure to the evils of non-residence." It is there stated, "that of 11,700 livings, there are 6000 under £80 per annum, many of these £20, £30, or even £2 and £3 per annum; in such a state of endowment all idea of rigid residence is out of the question: emoluments which a footman would spurn, can hardly be recommended to a scholar and a gentleman."—*Edinb. Rev. Vol. II. p. 204.*

contains none ; or the Morning Chronicle, which contains nothing that is true ; and which you certainly ought to have read and refuted, before you attempted to persuade the poor squires to borrow money at four per cent., and buy at a valuation of £6,250,000, a property which a learned doctor, who has been calculating upon the subject for the last thirty years, only values at £2,543,670.\* The author of a work professing extreme accuracy, and minute attention to details, with copious citations, endless figures, arithmetical columns, and commercial balances, all tending to the spoliation of the church, and the abolition of tithes, ought to have read an octavo of 578 pages, purporting to be "An Essay on the Revenues of the Church of England, with an Inquiry into the necessity, justice, and policy, of an abolition or commutation of Tithes ;" and would certainly have ranked higher in the list of political economists, if he had grounded his proposals on a refutation of this work, instead of trusting to an inadequate deduction from the monstrous exaggerations of a daily paper. As for the items of Dr. Cove's estimates, I have not time or patience to detail them, and must therefore give the sums in gross on his authority, adding as few correlative observations as I can well avoid.

The gross revenues of the archbishops and bishops he states at £130,000 per annum, which however is so greatly diminished by the payment of diocesan officers, the repairs of episcopal residences, &c., that the nett revenue does not probably exceed £105,000 ; so that comparing the present incomes of the sees, with the valuations of them in the King's books, including the livings, &c. annexed to them since Henry VIII., being about £24,000 per annum, the episcopal revenues will only have increased in the proportion of five and a half to one, so much have they suffered by the fraudulent and forcible alienations of their lands pre-

\* In this the university tithes are included, for, although they are not mentioned, I suppose the reforming knife is to be applied to them.



vicious to the statute of James I., and the subsequent robberies of the Commonwealth.

|                                           |            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| The Revenues of the Deans and Chapters he | } £275,000 |
| rates at .....                            |            |
| Their ancient value was .....             | 38,500     |

So that they have increased in the proportion of seven to one; and the number of people maintained by this income, including minor canons, singing men, choristers, &c. &c. is about two thousand.

From an estimate formed on an approximation of the incomes of a very extended number of livings in every part of the kingdom, collected within the last seven years, the gross amount of 5098 rectories and 3687 vicarages, with 1864 benefices neither rectorial nor vicarial, from the diocesan returns, he states at £2,557,202: and averaging the parochial benefices with their consolidations at about 10,000, this would give an income of £255 each to 10,000 clergymen. In this statement the annual rent of lands purchased by Queen Anne's bounty,\* and the annual interest of money appropriated to the augmentation of small livings, are included, together with the glebes and surplice fees, but the universities are excluded.

Thus the whole income of the clergy which, according to your calculations, amounts to . . . £7,600,000  
According to Dr. Cove is only . . . . . 2,962,202

Total of exaggeration by his estimate . . 4,637,798

The number of clergy he states at 16,000, and including their families about 100,000 souls. The

\* Those of the laity who object to the unfair disproportion of church benefices, ought to consider, that by the operation of Queen Anne's Bounty, a reform in that respect is gradually operating. Previous to 1703, the first fruits and tenths of the larger livings (the smaller ones being discharged from that payment) were paid to the crown; but Queen Anne relinquished them to create a fund for the augmentation of small livings. This, therefore, is exactly what church reformers call for—a tax upon the large benefices for the augmentation of the small ones. From 1703 to 1815 the governors had made augmentations to the amount of £1,464,500. At the establishment of that fund there were 5597 livings whose incomes did not exceed £50 per annum. The average value of 660 livings in the county of Lincoln was stated in 1799 at only £70 per annum.



portion of this income arising from tithes, he calculates as follows :—

|                                                                                                   |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The Annual Revenues of the Parochial Clergy have been stated at .....                             | £2,557,000 |
| The Augmentation Lands are .....                                                                  | 100,000    |
| The Glebes and Surplice Fees, calculating at £40 per annum, on the average nearly amount to ..... | 426,000    |
| The Annual Revenue of the Parochial Clergy from Tithes therefore is .....                         | 2,031,000  |

The impropriations he calculates at £1,538,000, of which one-third belongs to the clergy and universities, equal to £512,670; the whole clerical income from tithes, therefore, according to this gentleman, whose calculations are founded generally upon actual returns, and are the consequence of deep research and long acquaintance with the subject, amounts to £2,543,670 per annum, including the universities: yours, founded upon a vague estimate in a daily paper, of what it *ought* to be, amounts to £6,250,000, exceeding the former by £3,706,330; and upon this you gravely come forward with a proposal of abolition, and offer the poor landlords money at four per cent., in order that they may buy off a burden over-valued by such an enormous sum; and which, as far as I can understand the theory of one great political economist, is scarcely any burden upon them at all.\* Of the wisdom of such a proposal, on such grounds, it is easy to judge—of its equity I will say no more. From the preceding calculations we may judge with what fairness the clergy and lay impropriators are accused of extortion in the collection of their revenues.

The whole extent of England being 38,500,000 statute acres, the number supposed to be employed

|                                                                          |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| * The produce of the Tithes is estimated in the "Remarks" at about ..... | £156,000,000 |
| They might perhaps be worth, at 25 years' purchase, about .....          | 60,000,000   |
| Exaggeration.....                                                        | £96,000,000  |

in agriculture is 33,000,000. The annual agricultural produce of England and Scotland was valued in 1805 by Mr. Pitt at £160,000,000. The agricultural produce of England was valued, in the Essex Agricultural Report of 1807, at £145,000,000. Dr. Cove values it at £136,000,000. And therefore, if the parochial clergy had their full tenth, they would be entitled to an annual revenue of £13,600,000, exclusive of their glebes. The gross value of tithe-free lands he takes at £2,000,000 per annum; the land or rent discharged from tithes, by moduses, prescriptions, &c. he values at £3,000,000; in all £5,000,000. Now suppose the agricultural acres to be 33,000,000, and their rent to be 20s the acre, it will follow that the rental subject to tithe is £28,000,000.

|                                            |            |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|
| The Parochial Income from Tithe amounts to | £2,031,000 |
| The Improvements .....                     | 1,538,000  |

£3,569,000\*

Which, in proportion to that part of the agricultural acres, subject to the payment of tithes nearly 28,000,000, and valued at 15s, 20s, or 25s the acre, will be under 3s 5d in the pound at 15s the acre; a little above 2s 6d in the pound at 20s the acre, and a little above 2s in the pound at 25s the acre; and thus the tithes are compounded for at a rate not greatly exceeding an eighth of the titheable rental of £28,000,000, instead of a tenth of the titheable gross produce of £98,000,000, estimating that produce at three and a half rents; and estimating the titheable rental at 20s the acre, so that by this account they receive little more than one-third of their legal right.

Having differed from you thus far, it is gratifying to me to be able to thank you for the moderation of your language, and the courteousness of your manner, and to discover some points in which we agree. I am no

\* These numbers are wrong in the First Edition: I copied the Second line of figures £1,588,000, instead of £1,538,000.



optimist; I do not think the church of England spotless; I think the distribution of her revenues may be too unequal, and that her pluralities and non-residence are a defect which, though greatly diminished, ought to be more so; but I do not think her imperfections are an apology for those who desert her communion; and, firmly as I am attached to her as an establishment, from the thorough conviction that it is the will of God that civil governments should maintain an established religion, I think that there should at the same time be an unlimited toleration of all others: and I pray God that the time may come when it may be found expedient to dispense with all exclusions. But at the same time, it is but just to discriminate between political caution and religious bigotry. Even Voltaire admits that dissenters are not entitled to the same honours and rewards with those of the established religion. “Je ne dis pas que tous ceux qui ne sont point de la religion du prince doivent partager les places et les honneurs de ceux qui sont de la religion dominante” (*Traité sur la Tolérance*).—The adversaries of the Catholics do not exclude them because they believe in transubstantiation, but because the profession of that doctrine is the test by which they are known to be members of a church which it is believed would destroy our liberties if it could, and because Roman Catholics cannot bear the same allegiance to the king as they whose allegiance centres in a temporal sovereign alone. There is therefore no analogy between the case of Papists in a Protestant country, and Protestants in a Papist country; the allegiance of the former is considered to be divided, that of the latter centred in one alone. God grant the time may come when this necessity, if it be a necessity, may cease; when fidelity on one side may meet with charity on the other; and Roman Catholic “steeple” be permitted to point out to their English votaries the road to Heaven. With these reflections I will draw this tedious Letter to a close—not for want of matter, for its superfluity overwhelms me, but for want of leisure: and if in the course of it, any uncharitable or



offensive word to you, or any set of men, should have escaped me, I hope it will be attributed to levity of expression, and not to any want of charity.

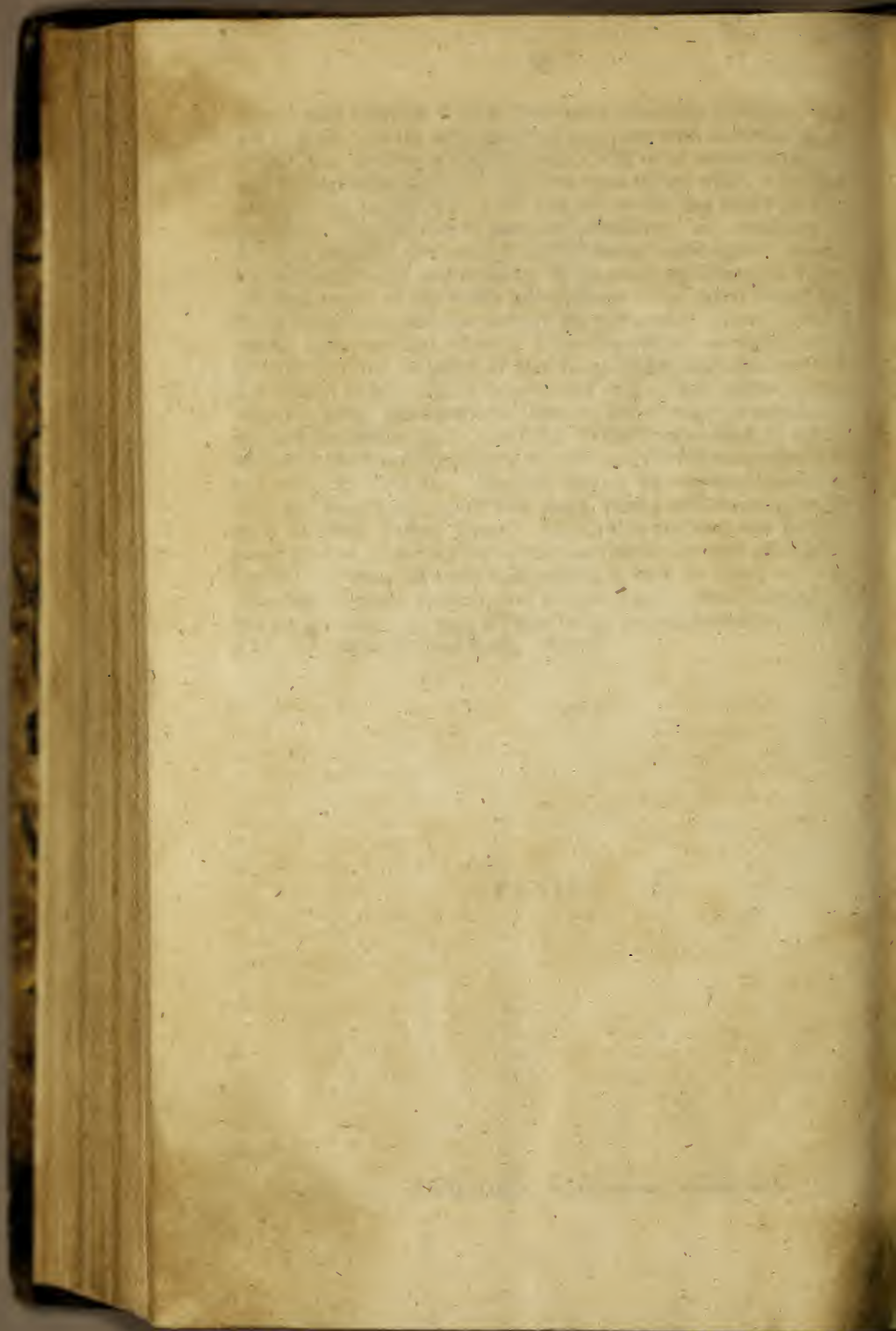
The following sentiments, extracted from a recent charge by a venerable bishop of our establishment, are so much in unison with my own, that I am induced to press them into my service for the conclusion of my work; and if all parties could be persuaded to abide by them, the peace of God might still be amongst us; and the followers of a crucified Redeemer be brought to charity, at least, if not to unity; contented to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, without attempting to make all men think alike, or by preposterous associations to pretend to a union of sentiment which they cannot feel. "Towards our dissenting brethren, intent as many of them are upon promoting, in common with ourselves, the great purpose for which the gospel was imparted to mankind, it behoves us to demean ourselves with charity, with good will with respect. But while they pursue their course unnoticed and unproved, let it be allowed to us to do the same; we concede toleration freely and fully: we claim only to be equally unmolested in our own privileges, and thus to preserve the relations of peace and amity: what more does Christian charity require? or what further advances can be made towards an interchange of good offices, without a compromise on one side or the other, or perhaps on both, of sincerity and truth?"\*

I remain, &c.

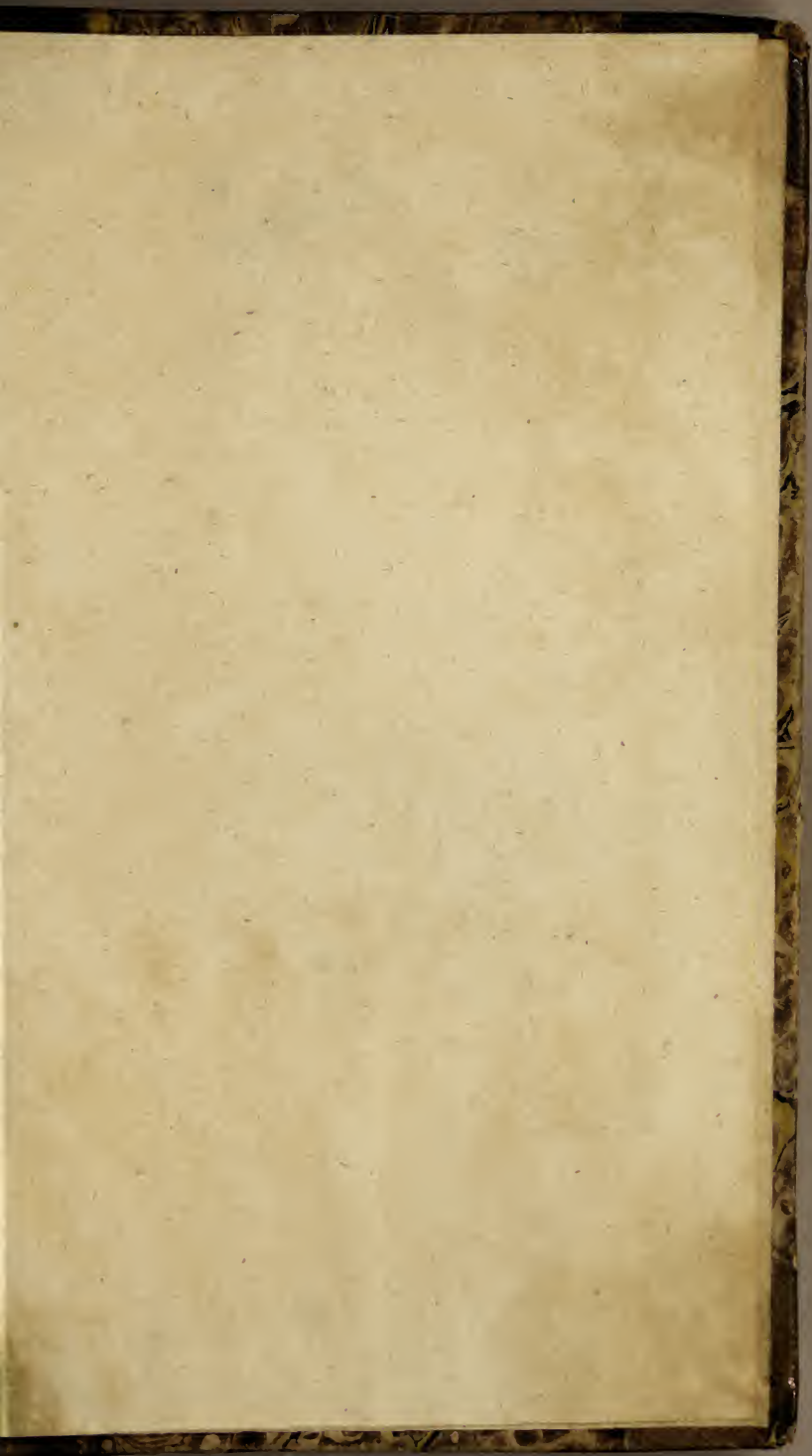
AUGUSTUS CAMPBELL.

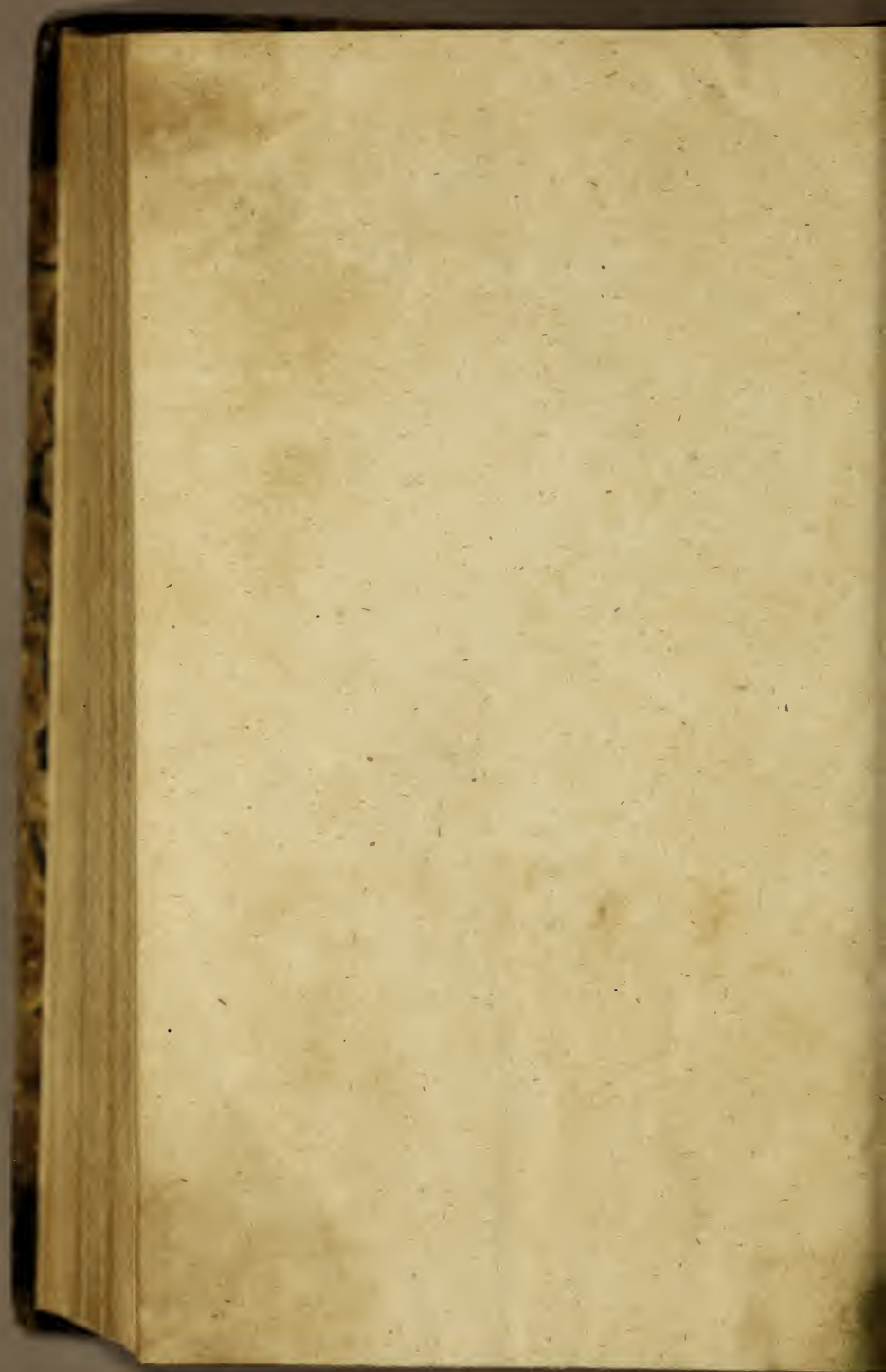
\* Bishop Van Mildert's Charge to the Clergy of Llandaff, 1821.











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